

Reading Policy

The Shrubberies School and The Apperley Centre



Approved by: Rachel Stephens

Last reviewed on: September 2025

Next review due by: September 2026

Overview

The ability to read is essential for many aspects of life and is crucial for overall development and understanding in a variety of subject areas. All staff members place a strong emphasis on teaching reading. Reading fosters conceptual learning and helps students' imaginations and experiences grow. Our goal is for students to read at a functional level with rising fluency by the end of their Shrubberies School education, so they may interact with their environment with growing competence and confidence. We want to accomplish this while making sure that the instruction considers the complexity and individuality of our students.

Reading is any action that results in the interpretation of a visual or tactile representation, such as an object, an image, a symbol, or written words, for students with additional needs. They can be reached visually, audibly, or physically.

Our reading strategy also exemplifies the close relationship between reading and communication that we know is inextricably linked. Language serves as the connective thread that, when utilised effectively, helps to bring people together. As a school, we understand the need for a total communication environment.

Reading is at the very heart of our curriculum and we are committed to promoting a love for reading for all our students.

Intent

The intent for our students is to:

- recognise and understand their immediate surroundings to help them feel safe and prepared to engage in learning
- use objects, photos and symbols to anticipate, predict and communicate
- read words
- foster a lifelong love for stories and literature
- read with purpose gaining information from a variety of texts
- apply their reading skills to engage with the wider community in preparation for life after school.

Informal Curriculum - The intent is that the curriculum elicits reactions, builds relationships, establishes preferences, finds motivators, develops interests, supports curiosity and encourages intrigue and exploration. Students learn to make connections and explore the world around them.

Semi-formal Curriculum - The intent is that students explore patterns and sequences, social and moral dilemmas, language for thinking, pattern, memory, and ways of finding new information. They select a few words, symbols or pictures with which they are familiar with and derive some meaning from text, symbols or pictures presented in a way familiar to them. They match objects to pictures and symbols. Where appropriate, pupils will access our Monster Phonics reading scheme. A student will not start the formal Monster Phonics scheme until a level is reached whereby students have good oral language skills, they are able to actively listen, they have a wide vocabulary and have the narrative skills to engage in the formal side of phonics and reading. Students will have progressed and be confident in the foundation stage of Monster Phonics.

Formal Curriculum - The intent is that students learn to read fluently, understand both fiction and non-fiction and are encouraged to read for pleasure and for purpose.

Implementation

The implementation for our students includes:

- a total communication learning environment using a variety of strategies and aids such as PECS, individual communication aids, Widgit and Signalong
- activities that develop focused listening and attention
- an environment that supports high-quality exposure to language
- stories, rhymes and poems to support language development
- regularly being read to by school staff
- access to repeated sensory stories using props, actions and a special emphasis on repeated phrases and rhymes
- developing early reading skills using Objects of Reference, TOBI's (True Objects Based Icons), photographs and symbols
- having an awareness and understanding of a visual timetable
- developing phonological awareness through a range of engaging activities using the Foundation Stage of Monster Phonics
- daily (timetabled and cross-curricular) teaching of our systematic and synthetic phonics program, Monster Phonics
- the correct pace and delivery of the multi-sensory, Monster Phonics that is carefully adapted to the needs of our students
- setting students according to ability (Middle School)
- introducing a combination of approaches to support reading, due to students needing an alternative to our preferred method of teaching reading
- individual interventions
- adults hearing pupils read regularly (1:1, small group, class)
- developing students' understanding of text through questioning that is closely linked to the students' level of communication
- reading whole words and symbols purposefully in the community and in the school working environment
- engaging parents in their child's reading journey
- accessing our local library
- individual EHCP learning outcomes
- Monster Phonics reading books that provide adequate challenge matched to students' reading levels
- reading corners in all classrooms
- engaging in a dialogue and answering relevant questions on what they have read to develop their comprehension skills
- individual choice of reading books
- access to Monster Phonics in Upper School if progress is seen to be continuing

- access to a broad range of texts and literature, plays, novels, newspapers, poetry, comics, non-fiction texts and stories
- the real-life application of reading for Preparation of Adulthood (PfA)

Impact

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify students that need additional support. It informs staff of the next steps in any individual students' reading journey and therefore can be planned for accordingly.

Phonics progress is monitored three times per year using the Monster Phonics assessment framework. We assess all students that access Monster Phonics.

Assessment for learning is used continually within class identifying students' progress and areas for development.

Earwig, is our chosen online assessment tool. We have a suite of assessment frameworks and are able to mix and match these for each pupil. Our Earwig Framework Library currently contains Routes for Learning, EYFS Areas of learning, EYFS Characteristics, Pre-KS standards, EHCP objectives and Functional Skills: Maths and English. The Earwig app allows our teachers to effortlessly link their evidence records to pupil targets from any number of frameworks and amalgamate this into one seamless and vivid timeline for any student. Earwig produces elegant, vivid and data driven pupil reports. Teachers and aspect leads are able to access Earwig to identify disparities between cohorts of students and to identify individual students' progress within reading.

Where appropriate, students in Y1 and Y2 can take part in the phonics screening programme.

Many of our students go on to develop the skills and confidence in reading for continuing study, including Functional Skills English.